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**U.S. Transportation Secretary Slater Announces  
Final Results of Commodity Flow Survey**

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today announced final results of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) 1997 Commodity Flow Survey (CFS), the most detailed national survey covering freight shipments by all modes of transportation in the United States.

“Six years ago President Clinton and Vice President Gore put in place a bold, new economic strategy that has helped to bring about the longest economic expansion in history,” U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater said. “The CFS identifies a dramatic increase in the value and weight of goods shipped by American businesses between 1993 and 1997, reflecting the effectiveness of that strategy and robust economy in which we live.”

The industries covered by the CFS in 1997 shipped over 11 billion tons of goods worth almost \$7 trillion, accounting for 2.7 trillion ton-miles of activity on the nation’s highways, railroads, waterways, pipelines, and aviation system. Both value and weight of shipments in the CFS are increasing faster than the rate of gross domestic product (GDP). Compared to 1993 CFS data, value is up 18.8 percent, tons are up 14.5 percent, and ton-miles are up 9.9 percent.

According to Dr. Ashish Sen, director of BTS, the survey quantifies the magnitude and value of changes since the first CFS in 1993, highlighting changes by types of commodities and regions of the country, and shows the importance of intermodal transportation to the nation.

“The 1997 survey provides the first comprehensive picture of changes over time across all forms of freight transportation,” Dr. Sen said. “These data are an excellent resource for transportation and economic development planners at all levels of government, as well as shippers and carriers in the private sector.”

For single mode shipments by industries covered in the CFS, trucking remains the dominant mode by value. For-hire trucks and trucks owned by shippers together still account for seven out of every ten dollars of commodity value shipped (71.7 percent in 1997, down slightly from 75.3 percent in 1993).

Intermodal transportation continues to be a critical component of the freight transportation system. Shipments by more than one mode of transportation accounted for 13.6 percent of the value of all movements measured in the 1997 CFS, representing a growth of almost 43 percent in just 4 years. Shipments by rail and water combinations and by parcel/postal/courier services show the largest increases in average miles per shipment since 1993.

According to the CFS, the fastest growing modes of transportation by value of shipments are

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air freight and parcel/postal/courier services, each of which are more than one and one half times the size they were in 1993. The value of shipments by air (including truck and air) increased 64.7 percent, while parcel/postal/courier services increased 51.9 percent, reflecting the increased emphasis on speed, reliability, and customer convenience. Air (including truck and air) and intermodal service by truck and rail increased by more than one third in tons and ton-miles since 1993.

Railroads, pipelines, and waterways continue to be the nation's backbone for moving bulk commodities, accounting for one-fourth of the tons and half the ton-miles measured by the CFS. When estimates of shipments not included in the CFS are added in the future, these totals will increase. Railroads and maritime transportation also carry a substantial quantity of imports which are high value commodities.

The 1997 CFS provides the first comprehensive view of hazardous materials flows in the United States. Hazardous materials totaled 1.6 billion tons, or 14.1 percent of all commodities measured in the 1997 CFS, with 80 percent being flammable liquids. These data are identified by mode, hazard class, division, and selected identification numbers to serve as exposure measures for risk assessments. The hazardous materials data represent a major expansion in the availability of safety data, particularly in the air and highway modes.

The survey measures the value, weight, mode of transportation, origin, destination, distance traveled, and other characteristics of shipments by mining, manufacturing, wholesale, and selected other establishments. The CFS uses a sample of over 100,000 establishments, representing 559 of the 1,004 industries in the Standard Industrial Classification system. The CFS is conducted as part of the Economic Census by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in partnership with BTS.

The 1997 CFS also provides the first look at commodity flows by metropolitan area. CFS results are being aggregated into 107 regions, including the 50 largest metropolitan areas and balances of states, to better match geography used by state and local transportation agencies.

The survey totals do not include crude petroleum shipments or shipments by farms, most of the services sector, and government establishments. Imports are also excluded. The out-of-scope shipments are being estimated separately by BTS.

Summaries of the national and state data are available from BTS through the Internet at [www.bts.gov](http://www.bts.gov). CFS data for metropolitan areas and other geographic units smaller than states are planned for release in the first quarter of 2000.

Printed copies of the report are available by contacting BTS by telephone at (202) 366-DATA, fax at (202) 366-3640, or by writing to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room 3430, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20590. Technical information about the report is available from Russ Capelle, (202) 366-5685.

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